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| APPLICATION NO. | FILING DATE | FIRST NAMED INVENTOR | ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. | CONFIRMATION NO. |
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| 10/055,131      | 01/22/2002  | Michael R. Grubbs    | N-8076              | 1527             |

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WADDEY & PATTERSON  
414 UNION STREET, SUITE 2020  
BANK OF AMERICA PLAZA  
NASHVILLE, TN 37219

EXAMINER

NGUYEN, TUAN N

| ART UNIT | PAPER NUMBER |
|----------|--------------|
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3653

DATE MAILED: 12/04/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

# Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/055,131

Applicant(s)

Grubbs et al.

Examiner

Tuan Nguyen

Art Unit

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

## Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE three (3) MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136 (a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

## Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 9/16/02
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11; 453 O.G. 213.

## Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 16-32 and 59-64 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above, claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 16-32 and 59-64 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claims \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement

## Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to by the Examiner.
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

## Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some\* c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \*See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e).

## Attachment(s)

- 15) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 18) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). \_\_\_\_\_
- 16) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 19) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 17) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s). \_\_\_\_\_ 20) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

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### **DETAILED ACTION**

1. Claims 16-32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 16 recites the limitation "the acceleration belt conveyor" and "the product belt conveyor" in lines 8 and 9. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

3. Claims 16-32 and 59-64 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wilbur et al. '674 (newly cited) in view of Golicz et al. (cited in 09/302,707) and McGarvey (newly cited).

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Wilbur et al.'674 disclose an apparatus and a method for handling light-weight articles comprising an acceleration conveyor 10 (fig. 1); a sensor 16 locating directly above the acceleration conveyor; a pinning structure 14 comprising a rotary feeder; a transition (unnumbered) after the acceleration conveyor; and a blowing system 17 operatively positioning to facilitate to carry the articles across the transition. However, the articles of Wilbur et al.'674 are not papers and Wilbur et al.'674 do not have a product conveyor downstream of the acceleration conveyor.

Golicz et al. disclose an apparatus and a method for handling paper comprising an acceleration conveyor 16, 18, 20, 22, 24 and 26.

McGarvey discloses an apparatus and a method for handling light-weight and flat shape articles comprising an acceleration conveyor 18; a sensor 24; a blowing system 38; a product conveyor 42; and a transition (unnumbered) locating between the acceleration and product conveyor. The product conveyor is oriented to carry articles in the same direction as the acceleration conveyor.

It would have been obvious to one skill in the art to modify the articles of Wilbur et al.'674 to have paper articles as taught by Golicz et al.. Such modification constitutes an intended use since vegetables such as spinach, tobacco leaves of Wilbur et al.'674 have similar shape and size as paper articles. Also, it would have been obvious to one skill in the art to modify the apparatus and method of Wilbur et al.'674 to have a product conveyor as taught by McGarvey to convey sorted articles to different location.

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4. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 16-32 and 59-64 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

5. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the date of this final action.

6. Any inquiry concerning this communication should be directed to Examiner Tuan Nguyen at telephone number (703) 308-3664.



tnn,

TUAN N. NGUYEN  
PRIMARY EXAMINER

11/29/02

November 29, 2002.